Photo courtesy of Mel White

DISTRESS SIGNAL

Rev. Mel White spotlights the menace of anti-gay rhetoric

By Cara DeGette

Mel White has marched down a winding path. Once a ghostwriter for evangelicals like Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, White burnt through more than $100,000 trying to "cure" himself of his homosexuality. He tried psychotherapy, electroshock, exorcism. None of it worked.

White ultimately came to terms with his reality: He is an evangelical Christian and a gay man.

In 1993, he became the head of the largest gay Christian congregation in the United States, the Dallas Cathedral of Hope Metropolitan Community Church. Upon his retirement, White and his partner of 24 years, Gary Nixon, moved to Lynchburg, Va., across the street from Falwell's ministry. The couple now attends Sunday services headed by the firebrand whose demonization of homosexuality is legendary. And when Falwell starts preaching his anti-gay rhetoric, White and Nixon stand up and, in silent protest, remind the rest of the congregation of the gays among them.

Earlier this year, White, 65, and Nixon co-founded Soulforce, a movement that, using the principles of nonviolence as practiced by Martin Luther King Jr. and Gandhi, is countering attacks against gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered people. In two weeks, the organization will descend upon Colorado Springs to confront Focus on the Family and its founder, James Dobson, for propagating what the group contends are false claims and lies about gays and lesbians — including that homosexuality is a mental disorder, that gays want to destroy families and that they are unfit to parent.

Soulforce activists hope to draw thousands of supporters from around the country for the rally at Focus' headquarters in northern Colorado Springs. In addition to engaging in acts of civil disobedience, protesters plan to encircle the ministry, holding hands.

It's been 11 years since White last came through town. At that time he staged a several-day hunger strike in front of Focus on the Family, in part to protest the ministry's key involvement in the passage of Amendment 2, Colorado's 1992 law designed to prohibit gays and lesbians from seeking protected status. The law was ultimately declared unconstitutional.

The ministry did not respond to a call seeking comment about White's upcoming visit. But in a letter sent last week to Soulforce, Focus on the Family's new president Jim Daly rejected a request to meet with White's group and called Soulforce's charges against the ministry "frankly composed of an appalling list of errors and distortions." Daly offered instead a public debate between the two groups, which Soulforce has dismissed.

"The debate is over. The verdict is in: Homosexuality is not a sickness, and not a sin," White said. "The only discussion we could have with [Dobson] now is, when will he quit telling those lies?" (Focus on the Family's letter, as well as the charges leveled by Soulforce, can be read in full at www.csindy.com.)

We caught up with White shortly after he returned from Kansas, which last week became the 18th state in the union to adopt an amendment prohibiting gays from marrying each other.

***Indy*:** What are you hoping to accomplish here?

MW: At the heart of it is the model of intervention. When a family finds a family member who is destructive to herself or to her community, they have to intervene. They simply take that person aside and say, "Since you can't see that you need help, we're going to have to help you get help."

And so we're intervening here because Mr. Dobson leads a double life. His rhetoric has gotten so irresponsible and so destructive; he says one thing to certain publics and he says a total other thing to others. He

As The Village Turns

By Rich Tosches

An epidemic in our schools

Today we will engage in a serious and mature discussion of a drastic sociological and behavioral change in our society, one involving the relationship between schoolteachers and their students. Because of the delicate nature of this subject, I would hope we could conduct this discussion without any juvenile and immature comments. An example would be:

Schoolboy No. 1: "Did you have Mrs. Finchgarth in science last year?

Schoolboy No. 2: "Yup. I also had her under her desk, in the football bleachers and on a cafeteria table."

Gwen Anne Cardozo, 33, an English teacher at Wasson High, is the latest to be accused of having sex with a student.

OK then. Let's proceed.

Unlike today's middle school and high school students, I never fantasized about having sex with my teachers. This was due in some part to a good upbringing by loving parents who taught me right from, well, from something. But mostly it was because during my formative years all of my female teachers either A. were huge, B. were old, C. had hairy warts the size of quarters on their faces or D. were old, huge *and* had hairy warts the size of quarters on their faces.

Today, of course, a lot has changed. Because America puts such a high priority on education, teachers' salaries now average roughly $119 per year — although they get summers off — and therefore they are unable to buy food. This keeps them slim. And because of the ensuing starvation, there are, fortunately, no more old teachers.

All of my female teachers either A. were huge, B. were old, C. had hairy warts...

In addition, because of advancements in dermatology, the quarter-sized hairy warts can now be removed safely and painlessly with lasers in a doctor's office.

But she *loved* him

All of which has apparently resulted in teachers and their students being attracted to each other and, after a long and romantic courtship period highlighted by a game of "Spin the Lunchbox," they have sex. This makes a lot of us long for the good old days, when "clap" was something you did with the chalkboard erasers.

Frankly, the whole thing has become an epidemic in our schools and in schools in other countries, too. Take this actual news story from the BBC News in December of last year:

School teacher Shelley White, 24, of High Green in Sheffield, has been charged with abusing a position of trust by causing or inciting sexual activity with a 15-year-old boy at her school. The incidents are alleged to have taken place in a school in Castleford, West Yorkshire.

As you know, it's not easy to incite sexual activity in a typical 15-year-old boy. In most cases, according to experts in the field of sexual behavior, such a thing requires that a female actually enter the room or that, lacking that event, the 15-year-old boy *thinks about* a female entering the room.

(As for English people engaging in sex in general, I think I speak for the group here when I say: "Eewwwwww! They're all white and pasty and ... Prince Charles and Camilla ... eewwwwww!")

But the real problem is right here in our own country. The exceptions would be Minnesota (too cold) and South Dakota (no teachers).

Experts say the epidemic in the United States began in 1996 in the town of Gig Harbor, Wash., when 42-year-old grade school teacher Mary Kay Letourneau — combining the French words *Le* "the" and *tourneau* "tour you will never forget" — began having sex with 12-year-old student Vili Fualaau.

Letourneau, who was married and had four children, said she loved her student — enough to let him get her pregnant. She was sentenced to six months in jail and ordered to stay away from Vili. Then she gave birth to the baby. When she got out of jail the happy couple resumed having sex and she became pregnant again, despite Vili's use of a condom. (Footnote: By "use" I mean he filled it with water, scampered onto the roof of Letourneau's house and dropped the water balloon on his startled fifth-grade friends.)

She was sent back to prison for seven years and was released earlier this month.

Trail of Tootsie Roll Pops

And then there's another well-adjusted teacher, 23-year-old Debra LaFave (another French word: "the favor") of Tampa, Fla., who is accused of having a sexual affair with a 14-year-old student at school and, this is the good part, in the backseat of a car while it was being driven by the 14-year-old's cousin.

LaFave's attorney said his client would plead innocent by reason of insanity at her trial later this month.

Sheesh. You leave one lousy trail of Tootsie Roll Pops in the hallway leading to your darkened classroom, and everyone thinks you're nuts.

And our very own state has now checked in with a pair of similar incidents. At Ponderosa High in Douglas County, sheriff's investigators say social studies teacher Nicole Barnhart, 35, had numerous sexual encounters with a 16-year-old boy who can now recite all the names of the rulers of the Ottoman Empire and, according to law enforcement officials, all the colors of Mrs. Barnhart's thongs.

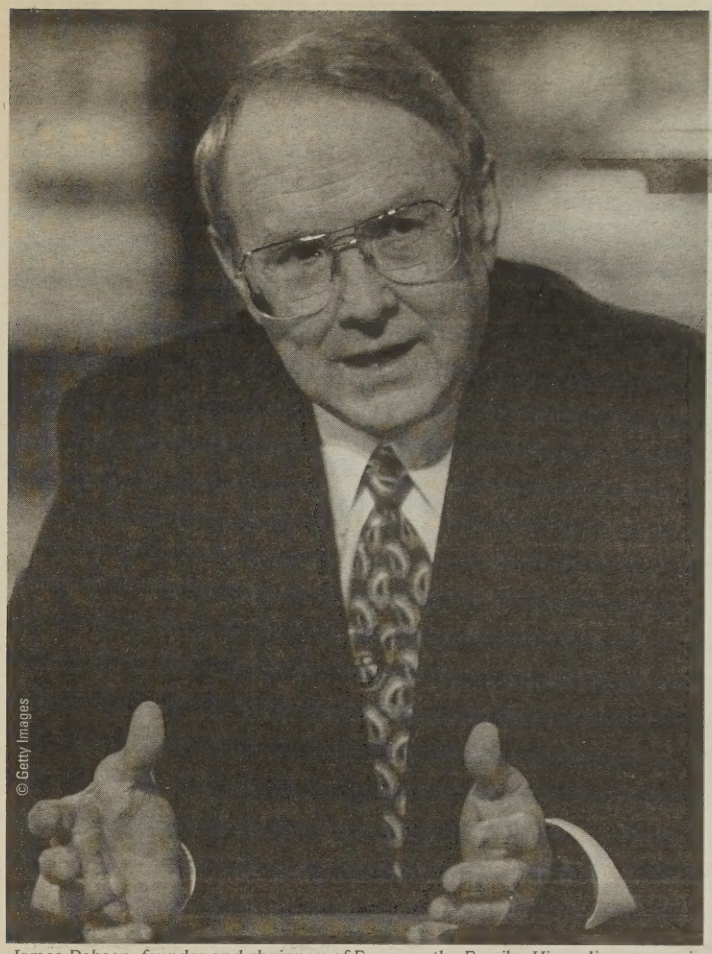
And finally, there's our very own Gwen Anne Cardozo, 33, a married English teacher at Wasson High. Last week she was charged with having sex numerous times with a 17-year-old student.

Call me paranoid, but maybe school administrators should start paying just a bit more attention to who they hire to teach our kids.

Because if they don't, someone is going to wind up with Michael Jackson as his music teacher.

— richt@csindy.com

Listen to Rich Tosches Thursday mornings on the "Coffey and Alisha Show" on KVUU-FM, 99.9.



James Dobson, founder and chairman of Focus on the Family. His radio program is broadcast daily to millions of people across North America and across the globe.

"We're intervening here because Mr. Dobson leads a double life."

— Mel White

will say, for example, to a rally in Washington, D.C., that we've videotaped recently, that we need to treat gay people with dignity and respect. And everybody cheered. And then he goes on to say to "you moms and dads" that we homosexuals are the worst possible threat to your children. That we are child molesters, that we shouldn't be allowed to teach or coach or foster care or adopt.

You can't say both things. His rhetoric leads to hatred and he is not being held accountable for it. We are coming to Colorado Springs to try to help him to understand the tragic consequences of his hyperbole and his half-truths and his lies. We're trying to hold him accountable and say this area, this part of Colorado Springs, this world headquarters, is a source of toxic rhetoric that is poisoning the national discourse. He's poisoning the air against millions of innocent Americans who do not in any way reflect the lies that he tells about us.

***Indy*:** But Focus on the Family purports to want to help gays; they promote the idea that homosexuality can be cured. They've got a whole gender issues department devoted to this issue …

MW: And that is perhaps the worst lie of them all. Why can't Dobson listen to any of his colleagues in the American Psychological or the American Psychiatratic or even the American Medical Association [who have all roundly rejected the notion that homosexuality is either an illness or can be "cured"]?

I have to bury the kids who kill themselves after going through reparative therapy. *I* have to counsel their parents after kids run away from home because they have been forced to have electroshock or reversive therapies or go through exorcism or excommunications — like they do in the Mormon Church where the church takes the hand of God off their lives and sends them out into the darkness.

This notion that you can be cured — I went through it and I know so many endless people who have gone through it and it leaves you far worse then if you hadn't gone through it. Conservative Christians have been lied to, to the point that they persecute their own children.

***Indy*:** What about claims by people who say they are no longer gay?

MW: Dobson will be able to find endlessly, year after year, people who say they are ex-gay. Because we know sexuality is on a scale. But then they crack up or then they simply walk away. If Dobson would just look at his own history of leaders that he's hired and see what path they've gone … instead he just hires somebody new, who keeps the lie alive.

***Indy*:** What do you mean he needs to look into his own organization?

MW: He needs to check out the people that he's interviewed in his radio broadcast over the last 15 years who are "ex-gays" and find out where they are, what they are doing now. The fact is, you can find people who have been out of the, quote, "gay lifestyle" for 20 years; there's no question about that. You can find examples of people who have been miraculously "cured" by Pat Robertson too, I suppose.

But the fact is that most of us have to learn to celebrate our sexuality and live it with integrity. And for those of us who are on the end of that scale, where we are gay as gay can be, we need the church to say, "God has given you this as a gift, celebrate it, live it with integrity." And instead Dobson creates this tremendous fear and doubt.

***Indy*:** Do you think James Dobson experienced a public setback with his stance on SpongeBob?

MW: No, no, no. They never lose when they get publicity at all. With Jerry Falwell, we thought that Tinky Winky would bring him down, and in fact he got over 1,000 Tinky Winkys sent to him and he gave them to children's homes and to orphanages all over the country. These guys are absolutely Teflon in terms of their ability to survive that kind of crisis. They know too that everything that puts their name into the public eye louder and brighter only helps enforce them. The people who don't like Dobson anyway laugh, but I'm always afraid when they do a SpongeBob or a Tinky Winky that people will stop taking them seriously.

***Indy*:** What about Fred Phelps, of "God Hates Fags" and "Thank God for 9-11" fame, who is planning to come back to Colorado Springs while Soulforce is here? One of their announced stops is in front of Focus on the Family to protest the ministry's empathy for gays.

MW: I spent an hour and a half, two hours, with Fred in his office in Topeka and talked to him about his theology. He believes that God wants homosexuals dead. And any kind of tolerance, any kind of discussion less than that is not fulfilling the call. So [according to Phelps] anybody who says anything less than what the Bible says — and the Bible makes it clear that a man

continued on pg. 18 →

SURPLUS CITY OUTDOORS

YOUR ONE STOP FOR MILITARY SURPLUS & OUTDOOR GEAR

• FISHING GEAR • SUMMER CARHART • CAMPING & HIKING

Carhartt
Shorts
Spring
Shipment

Carhartt
J130 BRN
Active Jacket
Sale Price
$49.99
Big & Tall
$55.99

Carhartt
B21 DST
Flannel Lined
Jeans
Stock Up For
Next Winter
Sale Price
$36.99

Carhartt
RO2 BRN
OR
RO2 BLK
Lined Bib
Overalls
Sale Price
$56.99

Carhartt
JO1 BRN Jacket
On Sale
Reg. Sizes $43.99
Big & Tall $47.99

JO2 BRN Jacket
On Sale
Reg. Sizes $49.99
Big & Tall $54.99

2732 W. COLORADO AVENUE
Corner of 28th & Colorado
(719) 634-1264
Hours: M-Sat 9-6 • Sun 10-5
www.surpluscity.com

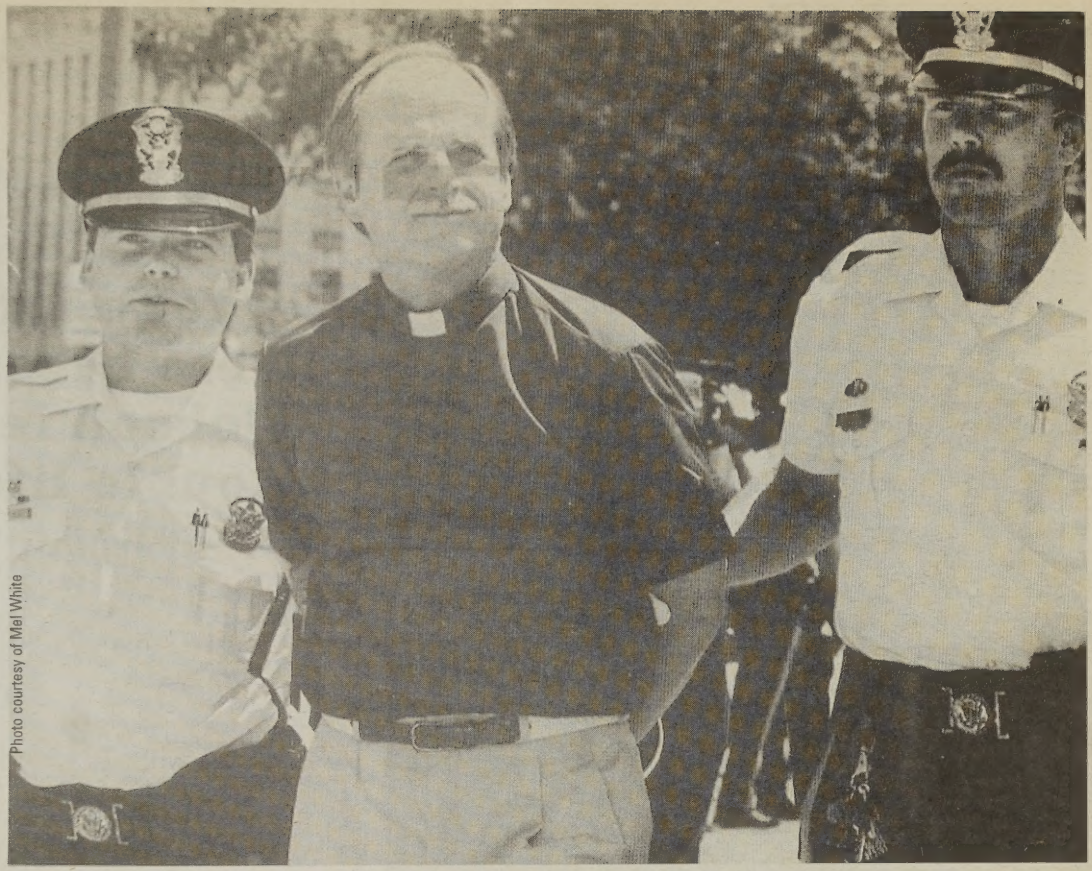


Photo courtesy of Mel White

Mel White, getting arrested during a non-violent demonstration for gay rights in Washington D.C.

→ *continued from pg. 17*

who sleeps with another man is an abomination and should be executed — is a traitor to the Bible and should be executed.

So Phelps is an extremist, but he gives this insight into the stealth of people like Dobson who say they're biblical literalists but then refuse to go all the way. Phelps says that while Mel White is obviously doomed to death, Dobson, just by being a selective literalist, is also dooming himself because he's not taking the stand that homosexuals should be killed.

***Indy*:** Why did you spend two hours with this man?

MW: Because nonviolence demands that we take our enemies seriously, that we hear them. Fred Phelps has an earned Ph.D., he has a major library in both Greek and Hebrew texts, he is a long-term biblical scholar who, like John Calvin, is consistent. He has gone all the way with those texts; he takes them literally. So I wanted to see really whether he was a nutcase or whether he had an analyzable theology, and he does. He's very articulate.

***Indy*:** So how did the conversation go? I'm trying to envision it …

MW: Oh man, he was concerned about my soul and I'm concerned about his. For me, the Bible is not inerrant, the Bible is inspired and trustworthy in all those areas to which it was called to speak — but it's not trustworthy in terms of science.

[Phelps] and I debated all these issues that a literalist would debate with a person like myself, who loves and respects [the Bible] but isn't a literalist. So we had a

Do you have what it takes

to become a Farmers agent?

FARMERS

Gets you back where you belong.

INSURANCE/FINANCIAL SERVICES
Matthew Roselle, District Manager
mroselle@farmersagent.com
www.farmersagentcareers.com
(719) 278-5040

Fred Phelps, pastor of the Westboro Baptist Church. The Phelps family has been to Colorado Springs twice this year waving signs that say "God Hates Fags," and "Thank God for 9-11" and have said they plan to return for the May 1 Soulforce rally at Focus on the Family.

great time, and then I went out and held up signs in front of his place saying, "God loves fags, God even loves Fred Phelps."

***Indy*:** I've heard people raise the question of, well, if we allow gays to marry each other then we're opening all kinds of doors, like to polygamy. How do you respond?

MW: Polygamy is a sign of weakening marriage, because it's not love and loyalty and commitment to one; it's beginning immediately to water it down. The notion that gay marriage opens the doors, well, the domino theory has never worked. It was the same thing that happened when they said, "What happens when we give women the right to vote? The next thing you know, we'll have to give them to black people."

To allow gay people to marry would, in fact, strengthen marriage. When gay people want to take on that responsibility and that duty and that commitment and that long-range togetherness of marriage, we should celebrate it, especially when at this point

continued on pg. 20 ➔

•PAID ADVERTISEMENT•

What a relief

Decompression machine helps with patients' chronic back pain

Colorado Springs — Relief is in sight for those suffering from back pain due to herniated or degenerative discs, joint problems, arthritis and sciatica.

Physical Therapist Mark Olson is using a new protocol, the Lordex Lumbar Decompression System, a breakthrough in the treatment of back pain.

He is one of the first specialists in Colorado to use state-of-the-art technology. The Lordex System enables the discs in the spine to be gently decompressed, relieving pressures on pain producing nerves in the lower back. Each patient's treatment program is specific for his or her condition. Removing the pressure not only allows the discs to reposition themselves, but also to regain fluid and become healthy and pain free again. The treatment is extremely comfortable and most patients fall asleep during the procedure. In most cases the back and/or leg pain resolves in the first few minutes of being on the machine.

LaSheryl relaxes while being treated on the Lordex Lumbar Decompression Unit. She has responded very well. The machine treats chronic low back pain, degeneration, and herniated discs. To qualify, please call Mark Olson, MPT at 719-380-8988.

RESULTS THAT COUNT

"For over ten years, I've been plagued with chronic low back pain. In the Spring of 2004, I was introduced to the Lordex Spine Institute. I've seen several different Chiropractors and Physical Therapist's seeking relief but went without results. This has truly been the only treatment that has ever helped me be free of my everyday pain. I really noticed a difference after my first treatment. I was able to bend over without pain for the first time in years! My life has completely changed after finding Lordex. I would recommend it to anyone with low back pain!"

Ann Marie H.
Colorado Springs, CO

"Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well presented body, but rather a skid in broadside thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming, "wow-what a ride."

~anonymous

"Mark Olson is a physical and massage therapist whose combination of manual therapy techniques compliment Lordex's total approach to health care."

For a real solution to your pain, call:
The Lordex Spine Institute
Colorado Springs Location:
719-380-8988 or 719-213-7567

We now accept Medicare & Tricare Standard

Manitou Wellness Center

New Solutions in Healing

- Medically based massage therapy
- Pre & post race conditioning
- Neuromuscular therapy
- Myofacial therapy
- Sports & injury rehab.
- Lymphatic-drainage therapy
- Deep tissue massage
- Stress management programs
- Craniosacral Biodynamics therapy

Georgi Gochis
Massage Therapist

Massage Therapists of the Sky Sox

For an appointment call 685-2372
Downtown Manitou
Accept most insurance. Call for details.

IntelliGent career decision . . .

HVAC TECHNICIAN!

The demand for HVAC Technicians is **projected to grow by 35%** through 2012.*

We also offer the following fast-track programs:

- Architectural Drafting
- Mechanical Drafting
- Network Security Specialist
- Electronic Engineering Technologist
- Network Systems Administrator
- Automotive Technician—**NEW!**

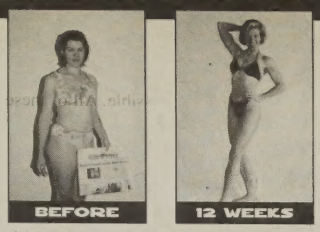
We have a **financial plan and graduate career placement assistance** for every student!
Be smart. Call today! **1-888-875-3021,** or visit **www.4intelliteccollege.com.**

Call Today!
888-875-3021

IntelliTec COLLEGES
2315 E. Pikes Peak Ave., Suite 100 • Colorado Springs • Colorado

*U.S. Census Bureau

Get Sandwiched!
At Mountain Mama's Deli
*Fresh soups made daily from scratch
*Delicious desserts
*Hot & cold sandwiches made on an assortment of fresh breads with a huge selection of toppings
Mountain Mama Natural Foods
Colorado Springs, CO
Family owned and operated
1625 W. UINTAH (Uintah Station Shopping Center)
633-4139 Mon-Sat 8-7 • Sun 11-5
Comfort Food That's Good For You

DONE WITH DIETING?


Change your body...Change your life!
Physique Transformations Studio
World class results - right here in the Springs!
now offering 1/2 hour sessions
4WeekFitness.com • 268-6909

→ continued from pg. 19

promiscuous sex is such a problem both in the heterosexual and homosexual world.

***Indy*:** Last month, a couple of Republican lawmakers from Colorado were heartily laughed down when they tried to argue during a press conference that if gays are allowed to marry then we are just opening the door to people wanting to marry their dogs or their horses. They were serious, but it came off as theater of the absurd.

"You know, once they discover you're as boring as we are, it's all over."
— Talk show host Larry King, as quoted by Mel White

MW: But Dobson says that all the time, so someone must be taking it seriously.

***Indy*:** Yet here in Colorado, that kind of talk was dismissed as ridiculous at the state Capitol.

MW: Ahh … that's the irony. There's so much hope on the table, and so much fear that that hope won't be realized. I'm going up and down like somebody on a pogo stick because there are these great moments when people take a stand on our behalf, and then suddenly whole communities turn against us. Fundamentalists play the blame game; they've got to find villains and we're the top villain right now.

***Indy*:** How did this happen?

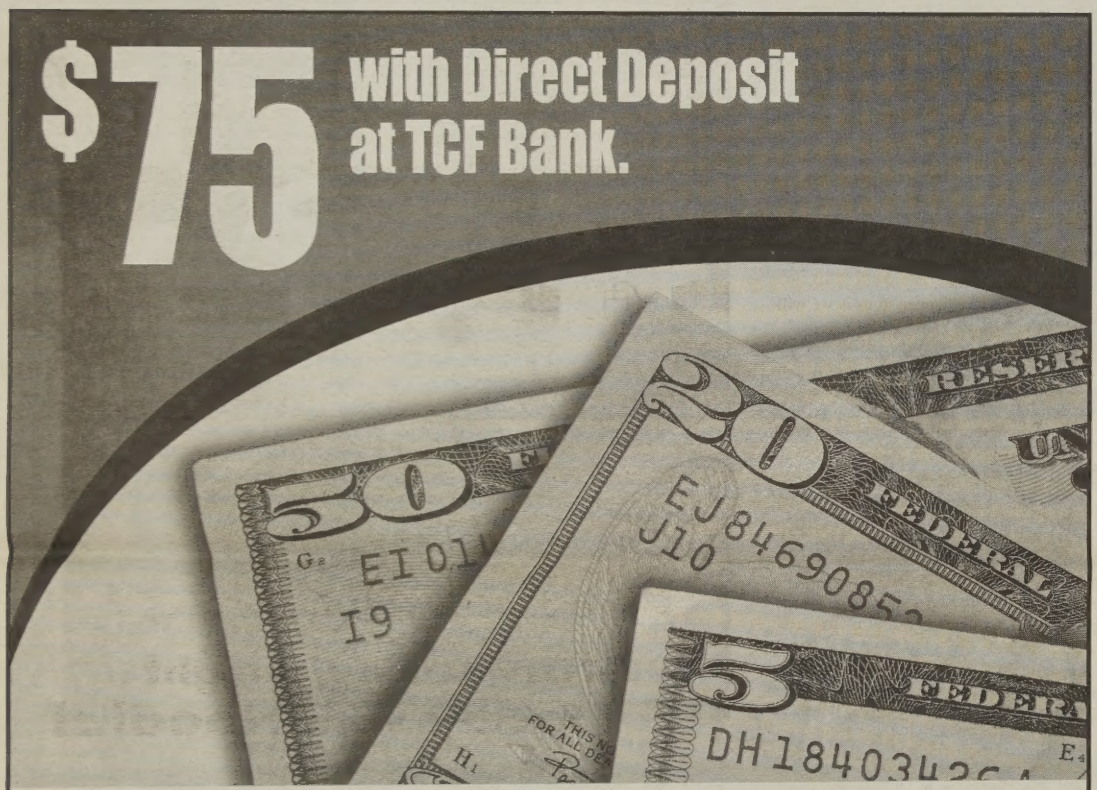
MW: It has quite a historic, easily followed timeline. In 1973, Jerry Falwell went to Rev. Francis Schaeffer and said, "[Fellow evangelist] Billy Graham's nice but he'll never get the country changed. We've got to save this country; we've got to Christianize it and take it back."

And so Francis Schaeffer suggested this notion of co-belligerency, finding those issues that people will sign onto. And of course the evil communist empire was the first one. Jerry [Falwell] took it to all 50 states and to the Capitol and up rose the Moral Majority.

At the same time Karl Rove and Paul Weyrich and all these guys were desperately in need of something that would keep the money flowing to keep them on the air. They began to test demographically what co-belligerancy issues rang true to more people, and abortion and homosexuality were really winners in certain zip codes areas. So when the wall fell, homosexuality had proven to be *the* issue that made most people afraid.

***Indy*:** Afraid of what?

MW: Suzanne Pharr in her book, *Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism*, details how, as fundamentalists work to reinstate the human male into their position of leadership and of dominance, homosexuality undermines that. Homosexuality's a real threat to that macho role type. And now marriage, the idea that two men could live together in harmony and love and raise families — that is *so* disgusting to people. The "ick" factor is really big.

$75 with Direct Deposit at TCF Bank.

Just establish Direct Deposit by July 1, 2005 with any personal checking account and TCF will give you $75.
Deposit must post by September 1, 2005 to be eligible. See a TCF representative for details.

Weekdays:	Branch Hours:	9 a.m. to 8 p.m.
	Drive-up Hours:	7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Saturdays:	Branch Hours:	9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
	Drive-up Hours:	8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sundays:	Branch Hours:	11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
	Drive-up Hours:	11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

TCF BANK Since 1923
Colorado's Most Convenient Bank Open 7 Days
©2005 TCF National Bank / www.tcfexpress.com / Member FDIC
Equal Housing Lender

***Indy*:** Among which people?

MW: Among everybody who fears or misunderstands or hates homosexuals. "What do they do in bed?" That's the first question that will be phoned in on talk shows. When I was on *Larry King Live*, someone asked that question and he hung up on them and said, "It's not their business." And I said, "Yeah, it's their business," and even Larry King was afraid. So I said, "My partner Gary and I have been in the same bed for 24 years. We're like everybody else — we *sleep* in bed." And Larry King said, "You know, once they discover you're as boring as we are, it's all over."

Their notion of what we do in bed is absolutely gross to people who don't understand it. And now, of course they're tying it in with pedophilia and the Catholic Church [pedophile scandal] and Michael Jackson and all that stuff.

***Indy*:** Marilyn Musgrave, the congresswoman from Colorado who introduced the federal marriage act designed to prohibit gays and lesbians from marrying, does not seem to have a clear-cut connection with Focus on the Family. Have you met with her? What do you think is her agenda?

MW: I think she's a sincere, well-meaning evangelical fundamentalist Christian and I think she's simply translating into her arena what she's heard in her church. I think her agenda is, if she has an agenda and it's political, to stay in office.

Their long-term agenda is to make sure we have no rights, and then if we have no rights then where do they want to go next? They will obviously want to take away our children and prohibit adoption or foster care or even co-parenting. Then what will they want? They will want to censor the media so that we don't have programs anymore that honor us or even show us in any positive light. Then they will start closing down public arenas; they will not want us to have parades or celebrations or conventions. They will try to use the power of the government to close down public areas for us.

CAPSULE

Mayday! Mayday! Picnic and rallies to protest Focus on the Family's claims about homosexuality

Sunday, May 1, and Monday, May 2

In front of Focus on the Family headquarters, off Interstate 25 and Briargate Parkway

For more, check out www.soulforce.org

***Indy*:** Do you really see that happening?

MW: Absolutely. It's happening now. Look at what's happening with public broadcasting; there's this wonderful family show that showed a lesbian couple and their child, and the new secretary of education said we can't have that on PBS. The FCC raised the fine from $4,000 to a quarter of million dollars for outrageous, outlandish speech. We already have a state, Florida, where adoption by homosexuals is no longer possible. All of these things are being tested in city and statewide laws.

Nothing that I'm saying is extreme. If Mr. Bush stays in power and Mr. Dobson stays at the right hand of power, the very worst things that we imagine will come true.

"God even loves Fred Phelps."

— Mel White

***Indy*:** Given that bleak outlook, where do you see the gay civil rights movement in 10 years?

MW: In the last five years the major mainline denominations — the Presbyterians, the Lutherans then the Methodists — started turning against us. We can't be married, we can't be ordained — which is the same thing as Dobson is saying, that our relationships are not worthy, that our spirituality isn't genuine.

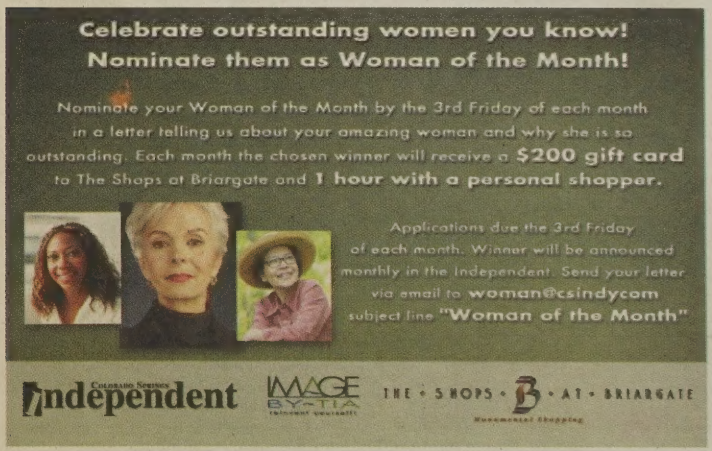
What's going to happen to us is we will have absolutely no voice in church and state alike. And so our movement is going to have to go underground. We will have to create resistance movements, working to get their faith renewed.

Thank God that the Metropolitan Community Church is already in place; thank God for the few welcoming congregations across the country; thank God for the priests and for the pastors and for the rabbis for even getting kicked out of their religious communities because they are taking a stand for us. We have all of these examples, where local congregations are simply saying quietly, we will not vote with the majority on this issue because we think the church is wrong.

Our job now with the civil rights movement is to help gay people celebrate that they are really God's children, and that they are really Americans. That the Constitution and the Bible are for them, too. ❐

TEXAS HOLD EM SATURDAYS
Huge Selection of Hand Built Poker Tables
Full selection of Vegas & Casino Gaming Supplies
Dealers and Rentals for Parties
Home of Rake Free Open Gaming
Rocky Mountain Poker
1045 Garden of the Gods Road Suite E
532-9559

Feeling Bloated?
Start Losing weight today with Hoodia!
• For effective appetite control
• As featured on CBS's 60 minutes
• Fools the body into feeling full
• A South Africa cactus, researched by Pfizer
• SAFE herbal supplement ~ not a stimulant
• 100% Hoodia (don't be fooled by extracts)
• $29.95 ea. Buy 2 and save $5
Sage Woman Herbs
308-A South 8th Street • Behind the Pink La Casita
473-9702 • www.SageWomanHerbs.com


Celebrate outstanding women you know!
Nominate them as Woman of the Month!
Nominate your Woman of the Month by the 3rd Friday of each month in a letter telling us about your amazing woman and why she is so outstanding. Each month the chosen winner will receive a $200 gift card to The Shops at Briargate and 1 hour with a personal shopper.
Applications due the 3rd Friday of each month. Winner will be announced monthly in the Independent. Send your letter via email to woman@csindy.com subject line "Woman of the Month"
Independent
IMAGE BY TIA
THE • SHOPS • B • AT • BRIARGATE

10 Days To Live

One-man wonder

Springs native returns with *El Conquistador*

Polonio (Thaddeus Phillips) contemplates the social structure in Latin America ... and an iron.

Thaddeus Phillips is no stranger to Colorado Springs. The Colorado College alum has frequently returned to perform here during his acclaimed career.

Phillips and his theater collective, Lucidity Suitcase Intercontinental, are renowned for their extraordinary use of scenery, props and video. And, recently, their newest production, *El Conquistador*, was selected for a five- to six-week run off-Broadway next season at the New York Theatre Workshop, which is most famous for introducing the smash hit *Rent*.

El Conquistador is fresh from a celebrated two-week run at Denver's Buntport Theater, a similarly award-winning, wacky consortium of fellow Colorado College alumni.

Like *Lost Soles*, which wooed audiences at CC's Armstrong Theatre in 2004, *El Conquistador* is a solo performance about a young man in a Spanish-speaking country. While *Lost Soles* told the story of a tap dancer in Cuba (yes, Phillips taps; he's also played King Lear opposite a set of golf clubs — the man's talents are many), *El Conquistador* chronicles Polonio, a Colombian peasant, working as the doorman of a big-city apartment building. (The play is performed almost entirely in Spanish, but don't fear: English subtitles will be projected onto the video screen.)

Polonio spends his days communicating with the building's residents via videophone and watching Latin American soap operas, or *telenovelas*. He eventually becomes completely absorbed in the TV world, imagining himself a character in the stories. And through the magic of multimedia performance, the *telenovela* stars, real Colombian TV actors, actually begin to interact with him onscreen.

Phillips, a frequent traveler, visited Colombia with collaborator Tatiana Mallarino, a Bogotá native. Mallarino's uncle Victor is a prominent Colombian actor, writer and director, who also works for Spanish-language TV giant Telemundo. The two Mallarinos and Phillips wrote character outlines for the *telenovela* stars, which was a treat for the actors, as *telenovelas* are known for their sentimental and overdramatic plotlines.

"We do have the stereotypical, incredibly handsome man, but they're really just normal people," Phillips says. "The work they do in our show is much better than what they do on TV. They improvised these characters and really made them evolve."

El Conquistador also explores some serious themes.

Phillips explains: "The social structure of Latin America, the class system, and the results of the history of the conquest of that part of the world are all leitmotifs throughout the piece. Subtly, though, so it's still very fun."

CAPSULE

***El Conquistador* starring Thaddeus Phillips**

Manitou Art Theater, 515 Manitou Ave., Manitou Springs

Thursday-Saturday, April 21, 22 and 23 at 8 p.m.

Tickets: $14 general admission; 685-4729 or www.themat.org

— Bettina Swigger

14 Thursday

Marry your love for maps with your love for Pueblo beginning today at the **El Pueblo History Museum** (301 N. Union Ave., in Pueblo), where **Mapping Pueblo: From Past to Present** is showing. View old-timey maps juxtaposed onto futuristic 3-D topographical maps, design maps of your own neighborhood and Zebulon Pike's first map of the area. In short, maps, maps, maps, maps, maps! An opening reception starts at 5 p.m., and the exhibit is free and open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesdays through Saturdays until May 14. For more information, call 719/583-6240 or check out www.frontierpathways.org.

15 Friday

Tonight, join photographer Agnes Kunz Vigil and friends for the opening of *American Slang: A Literal Photographic Interpretation of Sexual Slang*. This tongue-in-cheek exhibit is represented by a photo of a hand that appears to be strangling a rubber chicken over a toilet. (I don't get it.) This show's at **The Cache** (3659 Navajo St., in Denver) and runs through May 1. For more, head on over to www.akvphoto.com.

16 Saturday

You kooky punks oughta check out **The Black Maria** tonight at the **Navajo Hogan** (2817 N. Nevada Ave.). These Victory Records kids emerged from the breakups of the bands Grade, New Day Rising and Zyon and are fresh from South By Southwest. You're sure to get your requisite dose of angst, and their hooky guitar anthems will no doubt cause you to raise your fists and jump up and down. Plus, they're all adorable and wear tight black shirts and faux-hawks and stuff. They're playing with Anberlin and The Chemistry, and doors open at 7 p.m. for the 8 p.m. show. Tickets are $10. For more, check out www.victoryrecords.com.

The Black Maria are full of angst and hair products.

17 Sunday

Today, catch Springs supergroup **Dragonfly** at **Colorado College's Shove Chapel** (1010 N. Nevada Ave.). Composed of bassist Cathy Camp-Davidson, fiddler Hope Grietzer and Suzanne Schulze on cello, Dragonfly rocks those Irish, Scottish, French, Renaissance and contemporary folk ditties over which you crazy kids salivate. They're celebrating a CD release at this event, which takes place at 4 p.m. and is free and open to the public.

18 Monday

Here's your chance to ditch some of the celebrity gossip taking up space in your brain (Aaron Carter, you should be ashamed!) and get your learn on for real. Join UCCS anthropology professor Bill Arbogast for "**Messages from the Ancestors: Archaeological Evidence of Human Occupation in the Garden of the Gods and Pikes Peak Region**." This fiesta o' archaeology is the